

Message Text

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 23601

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: OVIP (KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN)
SUBJ: VISIT TO UNITED STATES BY PRIME MINISTER

REF: BANGKOK 23544

1. IN REFTTEL, I REPORTED PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK'S WISH TO VISIT THE U.S., PREFERABLY IN JANUARY. I RECOMMEND THAT WE ACT QUICKLY IN PROPOSING TO KRIANGSAK DATES IN JANUARY CONVENIENT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR THE VISIT.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE VICE PRESIDENT, WHEN HE DELIVERED THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION FOR A VISIT, INDICATED TO KRIANGSAK THAT THE PRESIDENT DID WANT TO RECEIVE HIM EARLY IN 1979. GIVEN THE IMPENDING SCHEDULE FOR ELECTIONS AND RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE HERE, KRIANGSAK WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LEAVE THAILAND CONVENIENTLY AFTER EARLY FEBRUARY.

3. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW I BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE PROCEED WITH SCHEDULING THE VISIT, GIVEN BOTH OUR IMPORTANT BI-LATERAL INTERESTS HERE AND THE DEVELOPING SOUTH EAST ASIAN SITUATION. AS WASHINGTON AGENCIES ARE AWARE, THE KRIANGSAK GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED CLOSELY AND COOPERATIVELY WITH US IN SUCH IMPORTANT AREAS AS REFUGEES

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AND NARCOTICS CONTROL AS WELL AS INTELLIGENCE LIAISON. IT WAS KRIANGSAK'S DECISION ALONE WHICH REVERSED THE PAST RTG POLICY OF REFUSING REFUGEES. WE HAVE REPORTED EXTENSIVELY ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITIVE ACTIONS IN THE NARCOTICS CONTROL FIELD.

4. BEYOND THESE CONSIDERATIONS, THAILAND OCCUPIES AN

EXPOSED POSITION AS TENSIONS AMONG THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST STATES AND THEIR GREAT POWER MENTORS RISE. IN THIS SITUATION THE KRIANGSAK GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FLEXIBLE, CONSTRUCTIVE AND CONCILIATORY. IN THE NEXT MONTHS THE VIETNAM PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG WILL BE VISITING THAILAND IN SEPTEMBER AND CHINESE VICE PREMIER TEMG HSIANO-P'ING WILL VISIT IN EARLY NOVEMBER. FROM THE THAI POINT OF VIEW AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THEIR FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH WE FULLY SUPPORT, IS A VISIBLE CONTINUING USG INTEREST IN THAILAND AND CONSTRUCTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA. THE THAI FULLY ACCEPT THE LIMITS OF OUR POLICY AND DO NOT EXPECT THE US GOVERNMENT TO REVIVE A MAJOR MILITARY PRESENCE. HOWEVER, HIGH LEVEL MANIFESTATIONS OF OUR SUPPORT AND INTEREST ARE PSYCHOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT AS THE RTG CHARTS ITS COURSE.

5. KRIANGSAK PERSONALLY HAS SET GREAT STORE ON THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION TO VISIT THE U.S. HE HAS PATIENTLY WAITED OVER THE PAST YEAR FOR US TO INDICATE WHEN HE WOULD BE RECEIVED. HE IS REALISTIC AND WANTS ONLY A BRIEF BUSINESS VISIT. IF WE DID NOT ALLOW HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT WASHINGTON EARLY NEXT YEAR, HE WOULD TAKE THIS AS A PERSONAL AFFRONT AND A REPUDIATION OF HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO DEAL COOPERATIVELY WITH US. BEYOND THAT, OUR RELUCTANCE TO SCHEDULE THE VISIT WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY HIS MILITARY PEERS, OTHERS IN THE THAI BODY POLITIC, SECRET

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AND THAILAND'S NEIGHBORS AS A CLEAR INDICATION OF DIMINISHED US SUPPORT FOR THAILAND AND LACK OF SUPPORT FOR KRIANGSAK PERSONALLY. HIS POSITION WOULD THUS BE SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKENED AT A TIME WHEN THAILAND IS THE FOCUS OF MAJOR HIGH LEVEL DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AND FACES SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES.

6. I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND QUICKLY AND AFFIRMATIVELY IN SETTING A DATE FOR HIS VISIT. ABRAMOWITZ

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